

**Minutes of Meeting of the Social Development Strategic Policy Committee
held in Council Chamber, Aras Contae an Chláir on Wednesday 17th June
2020 at 2.30pm**

Present: Cllr. Gerard Flynn, Chairperson
Cllr. Tony O'Brien
Cllr. Mark Nestor
Cllr. Ann Norton
Cllr. Paul Murphy
Cllr. Joe Garrihy
Cllr. Donna McGettigan
William Cahir
Tommy Guilfoyle
Larry Brennan
Noel Kearney
Mary Leahy – via Zoom
Anne Haugh, Director of Service
Siobhan McNulty, Senior Executive Officer
Helen Walsh, County Librarian
Tim Forde, Sports & Recreation
Richie Murphy, Sports & Recreation
Kathy Lordan, Assistant Staff Officer

At the outset of the meeting, it was proposed by Cllr. G. Flynn, seconded by T. Guilfoyle and agreed to adjourn the meeting for 15 minutes as a mark of respect to the late Colm O'Mahony, RIP.

The members of the Committee wished to be associated with the sympathies expressed and the adjournment of the meeting.

1. Minutes of Social Development SPC meeting held on 11th March 2020

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2020 were proposed by Cllr. A. Norton, seconded by Cllr. Donna McGettigan, and agreed.

2. Matters Arising

Noted that no response has been received to correspondence dated 13th March to Irish Water. Agreed to issue reminder.

3. Climate Change and Biodiversity

R. Murphy presented to the meeting on Biodiversity projects in Active Ennis/Kilrush indicating that the purpose of these projects is as follows:

- To ensure that everybody has access to quality green and other open spaces, irrespective of where they live.

- To ensure that these spaces are appropriately managed and meet the needs of the communities that they serve.
- To establish standards of good management.
- To promote and share good practice amongst the green space sector.

The members thanked R. Murphy for the presentation and a number of items were discussed including:

G. Flynn referred to the importance of approach taken in relation to communication on projects;

D. McGettigan queried the possibility of expanding into Shannon area;

T. Guilfoyle advised that signs saying grass is long for biodiversity reasons would be beneficial;

J. Garrihy queried if a biodiversity audit of the area had been carried out.

4. Covid 19 – Social Development Directorate

S. McNulty presented to the meeting in relation to plan for reopening services in line with the phasing outlined in the Government Roadmap.

N. Kearney requested information re. vacant Council houses; how many on HAP; age breakdown on HAP; number of housing grants provided; provision of accessible accommodation.

D. McGettigan and A. Norton referred to CBL and enquiries received re. same.

T. Guilfoyle referred to direct provision centre(s) being very costly and ineffective.

He suggested that HAP be an item on the agenda for next meeting and that this SPC might put a motion to Council.

G. Flynn referred to his Notice of Motion No. 32 on agenda for June Council meeting:

"I am calling on Clare County Council to support a call to The Taoiseach and Minister responsible for housing to urgently review the housing assistance payment (HAP) and design a better way to provide affordable accommodation and also to consult with local authorities in the process.

I believe this particular model of housing support is not suitable for people who have qualified for social housing. I believe the current policy lacks transparency and places a great degree of stress on vulnerable people who need assistance from the state and especially at this time of uncertainty. I would also request that if this proposal is supported that it be circulated to all other Councils and members of the Oireachtas."

5. Covid 19 – Wellbeing Initiative

H. Walsh reported that a cross directorate team have co-ordinated the Covid 19 well-being response and that the community helpline is still seen as the first point of contact for Covid related queries.

A. Norton thanked congratulated H. Walsh and her team on all the Library service have achieved.

In relation to Cruinniú na nOg, H Walsh advised that this event held on 13th June was entirely virtual with all events scheduled to take place in time slots over the course of the day. She also advised that the Vision Symphony had been nominated for a European Innovation in Politics award.

6. AOB

T. Guilfoyle queried if reports could be sent out before the meeting. S. McNulty advised that presentations etc. will be available on the day of meeting but the Monthly Management Report can be circulated with Agenda going forward.

Cllr. J. Garrihy referred to establishing sustainable energy communities in North Clare and queried if there was a sustainable Energy Action Plan in Clare. A. Haugh agreed to invite Mr. Pat Stephens to present to next SPC meeting in relation to this item.

L. Brennan referred to the following items:

1. Clare County Council stock condition survey
2. Building Regulations changing from November.
3. New Government in place and requirement for housing provision.

He requested a schedule of lands owned by Clare County Council be made available.

S. McNulty replied re. stock condition survey; all new builds are NZEB rated and will review if schedule of lands can be made public.

The meeting then concluded.

Signed: _____

**Cllr Gerard Flynn
Chairperson**

Signed: _____

**Anne Haugh
Director of Service**

Date: _____